Steel Pens.—The following interesting particulars are condensed from the *Morning Chronicle*:—Steel pens are almost entirely manufactured by women and young girls; and it is probable that out of the 2,000 persons or upwards now engaged in the business, not above 100 or 150 are of the male sex. The manufacture of pen-holders, and that of pen-boxes, give employment to an additional number of women and children, variously estimated at from 200 to 400 persons. About the year 1820 or 1821 the first gross of "three-slit" steel pens was sold, wholesale, at the rate of 7*l.* 4*s.* the gross. In 1830 they had fallen to 6*s.*, and in 1832 to 6*d.* the gross. A better article is now sold at 6*d.* per gross. One factory alone in Birmingham produces them at the rate of no less than 40,000 gross, or 6,760,000 in a week—very nearly a million, or 960,000 per working day, or 289,528,000 per annum. At the very lowest calculation, Birmingham produces 1,000 millions per annum. The cheapest pens are sold as low as 2*d.* per gross, wholesale; and the price rises, with the elasticity and finish of the pen, up to 3*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.* per gross. Birmingham produces them all, and one establishment has the distinctive marks of 500 different dealers in all parts of the country, as well as on the continents of Europe and America, for whom he manufactures, according to order. The sheets of steel, received from Sheffield, are reduced to the requisite tenuity by successive transits through the rolling-mill operations, tended by men and boys. When reduced to the thinness of a steel pen, length about 2 feet, breadth 2½ to 3 inches, the sheets are ready for punching out the blanks. This process is performed with great rapidity—one girl, of average industry and dexterity, being able to punch out about 100 gross a-day. The next operation is to place the blank in a concave die, on which a slight touch from a convex punch produces the requisite shape—that of the semi-tube. The slits and apertures to increase the elasticity, and the maker's or vendor's name or mark, are produced by a similar tool. Previously, however, the pen undergoes a variety of other processes. When complete all but the slit, it is soft and pliable, and may be bent or twisted in the hand like a piece of thin lead. Being collected in "grosses," or "great grosses," the pens are thrown into little iron square boxes by men, and placed in a furnace, where they remain till box and pens are of a white heat. They are then taken out, and thrown hissing hot into pails or tanks of oil, when they may be broken like so many wafers: after draining, they are made to revolve rapidly in a perforated cylinder.

Architecture.—What are those gay and glittering piles which rise under a brighter sun, and into a clearer atmosphere, on the banks of a smaller river? Yonder dark and heavy towers arose amidst the austerity of Gothic taste, and were loaded with the riches of Roman Catholic superstition; they have witnessed the march of the Crusaders and the coronation of Henry IV.; that gilded tomb attests the magnificence of Louis XIV., and covers the bones of Turenne: projecting into the stream is the ancient Tour de Nesle, the theatre of licentious tragedy; that beauteous row of columns conceals the windows from whence the massacre of St. Bartholomew was ordered; that red obelisk marks the spot where Louis and Marie Antoinette, and Danton and Robespierre, were executed: that perfect peristyle was begun by Napoleon for the Temple of Glory; that majestic arch in the distance was erected to the honour of the Grand Army. Ascend the Tower of the Capitol, and survey the mingled wreck of ages by which you are surrounded. You stand on the massy battlements which defied the arms of Brennus: the Roman senate-house, the palace of the Cæsars, are at your feet: that vast circular tomb on the banks of the Tiber contains the ashes of Adrian: yonder stupendous dome, which rises like a mountain in the west, covers the bones of St. Paul; it was reared by the genius of Michelangelo, and adorned by the pencil of Raphael: the sculptured pillars, which surmount all modern edifices in their vicinity, were erected to the honour of Trajan and Antoninus, the greatest and best of the emperors: that massy pile which still survives, like the skeleton of a world, the ruin of all its contemporary structures, was reared by the captive hands of the Jews: under those arches the triumph of Aurelian, the captive Zenobia, have passed. It is this wondrous and overwhelming concentration of historical interest into one focus, this presenting of it in actual objects to the senses, which constitutes the grand, the unequalled charm of architecture, and gives to genius, in that department, a lasting hold of the admiration of mankind, which the sister arts will seek in vain to attain.—*Alison's Essays.*

Visitors to Public Monuments.—According to a recent return, the number of visitors to the armoury of the Tower of London, from 1st February, 1845, to March 31, 1850, has been 249,338; amount received, at 6*d.* each, 6,233*l.* 9*s.* The annual number of visitors to the jewel houses, from January 1, 1845, to January 1, 1850, has ranged from 46,737 (in 1846) to 41,482 (in 1849); receipts, at 6*d.* each, 1,163*l.* to 1,037*l.* The number of visitors admitted without charge to the gardens and Palace of Hampton Court during 1849 amounted to 168,195, the largest numbers being May, June, July, August, and September, ranging from 49,476 (in August) to 14,505 (in September). The number of visitors admitted gratis to the Botanical Gardens at Kew in the same year was 137,865, from June to September. The Royal pleasure grounds at Kew, open from Midsummer to Michaelmas, were visited by 41,455 persons. The total yearly amount of money taken at Westminster Abbey from 1845 to 1849 inclusively has ranged from 1,306*l.* (in 1845) to 968*l.* (in 1849): admission gratis to nave, transepts, and choir: 6*d.* to chapels. The yearly amount received for admission of visitors to St. Paul's, at 2*d.* each during same period, ranges from 589*l.* (in 1845) to 429*l.* (in 1848).

Diffusion of Knowledge.—A Newcastle paper gives the following interesting fact, illustrative of the rapid spread of intellectual culture among a large and deserving class of the population of that district:—A bookseller in the market, in this town, recently had upon his stall ten copies of Emerson's work on Fluxions, all of which he sold at 7*s.* 6*d.* a copy to pitmen. He said they were by far his best customers, and that a standard mathematical work never laid long on his stall, being secured by them as a prize. On a subsequent day, at the same stall, there were three men; one bought a work on algebra, another requested a Greek delectus, the third was perusing a Spanish grammar. These men were all hewers of coal.

The Sculptor's Art in Rome.—The fine arts are receiving some impulse from the numerous visitors to Rome. The talented Prussian sculptor, Wolff, who is well known in England from having executed, besides many classic groups, some busts of the royal family and a statue of Prince Albert as a Greek warrior, has just completed an exquisite figure of Paris, in which the feminine beauty of

"The woman warrior with the curling hair"

is admirably portrayed. His four statues, personifying the seasons, have been purchased by an English amateur. Mr. Gibson is commencing the models of two very important works, Queen Victoria on her throne between two allegorical figures, representing Justice and Clemency, for the House of Lords, and the colossal statue of Sir Robert Peel.—Rome correspondence of the *Daily News.*

Metropolitan Sanitary Association.—On Friday in last week a deputation from this association waited on Lord Seymour, as Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, to represent to his lordship the necessity of certain alterations in the existing Act of Parliament for the suppression and prevention of nuisances, and also to pray the Commissioners to adopt some strenuous and efficient means of rendering the poorer districts somewhat fit and decent for the approaching visit of hundreds of thousands of artizans, mechanics, and others, to the metropolis, during the continuance of the International Exhibition. His lordship promised his careful consideration of the subject, in connection with documents to be laid before him by the Association.

Cornish Granite.—A very large block of granite, upwards of 20 feet long, and of the finest quality and colour, has lately been raised by the Cheesewring Granite Company, at their quarries, on the Cheesewring-hill, near Liskeard, which is intended to be sent to the Great Exhibition of 1851. The mass of stone, of which this formed a portion in the quarry, contained by measurement the extraordinary quantity of above 4,000 cubic feet, or about 300 tons in weight.

Roofing the Area of the Royal Exchange.—The principal objection to the roofing-in of the Royal Exchange appears to be, that it would destroy its architectural character. To obviate this, I would propose to cover the area with a light roof of cast-iron and glass, having its support several feet inside the parapet. I have no knowledge of the roof plan of the building, but should think this would not be difficult of execution. The character of the structure would thus remain precisely the same, the roof not appearing to form part of the building.—Criticus.

The Regent's Park.—One part of Regent's-park boasts the names of some of the most celebrated spots in Venice. St. Mark's Church will soon be commenced,—the waters of the Regent's Canal will bathe its walls. There is an unsightly old canal bridge that a very little outlay would render a second *Rialto*. Perhaps this may be a valuable hint to others from A Lover of the Picturesque.

TENDERS

For four houses and shops on the site of a part of the Old Grad, Manchester, as advertised. Mr. R. Gover, architect.

H. and M. Macklin and Brown	£2,395	0	0
Newman and Smith (accepted)	2,150	0	0
For painting and glazing only,—			
Willis and Son (accepted)	308	10	0

For a chapel at Stoke Newington. Mr. Wilson, architect.

Norris	£3,770	0	0
Ashby	3,230	0	0
Hayworth	3,135	0	0
Holland	2,986	0	0
Jay	2,988	0	0
M. and E. Curtis	2,964	0	0
Smith	2,949	0	0

[A trifling difference!]

For alteration and repairs to a house, No. 53, in St Mary Axe, for the City of London Union. Mr. Trees, architect.

Carter	£1,290	0	0
Marsh	1,275	0	0
Gamman	1,230	0	0
D. King	1,193	0	0
Curtis and Son	1,178	0	0

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"Agricola," "B. B.," "F. G.," "G. W.," "R. S.," "G. C.," "A Plumber," "A Poor," "R. R.," "W. M.," "A Competition" (declined with thanks), "J. C.," "J. P. S." (not our custom, paper having been read publicly, shall be happy to see it), "J. J. L.," "C. B.," "Mr. W.," "One of the Honourable Competitors," "T. L." Pimlico. (The drawback of duty is usually obtained by the party building, and not by the contractor.) "A Smith," "H. W.," "J. W.," "R. K.," "A Constant Observer," "T. H." (write to Rev. Mr. Carter, College-green, Bristol), "Idler in London," "M. M.," "A Competitor," "C. P.," "J. C." "J. K. C." (will see that Mr. Jones has replied), "J. T. W." "P. P. D." "Anti-Puff," "P. J. M." (we constantly treat of ventilation, but cannot now reply to a special case), "A Builder" (use concrete). A host of correspondents must excuse us. "T. M." "Brevity," "T. B. L." "A Pupil" (it is not usual to make pupils find lead pencils for their master's work), "J. J.," "E. M. P." "T. L." (thanks).

"A Subscriber" (the subject of drying closets has been fully discussed in vol. vii. pp. 219, 245, and 339; see also pp. 177, 209, and 273, same volume).

"*Books and Addresses.*"—We have not time to point out books or find addresses.

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ADVERTISEMENTS.

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Good Bed-room Papers	from 6½d. per yard.
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Rich gold paper	1s. 6d. "
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